

Annual report 2021–2022

Healthwatch Trafford



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Message from our chair

2021/22 has been a year of intermittent lockdown, changes to our staffing and offices, as well as consolidation of our relationship with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), soon to be the Integrated Care System (ICS).

We have also worked within our Greater Manchester network of 10 local Healthwatch to produce an all-age three-year strategy, a Collaboration Agreement and underpinning documentation which means that we can work on joint reports and surveys. Our priority for the coming year as a network is to work on Children and Mental Health services. These are the areas that we have submitted to the ICS to cement our relationship and to seek more equitable resourcing as funding becomes available.

Part of our work for the ICS has been to participate in a large survey of people's views on the way ahead for Greater Manchester's new five-year strategy. We staffed a dedicated telephone line for those unable to complete a survey online so that people could ring us directly to tell us what they thought. We continue to look at different methodologies to involve hard to reach groups as our recently appointed staff get out into the community. We have been sensitive to the needs of our volunteers by asking them when they feel sufficiently confident to resume face to face work. However, some of our volunteers have been involved in various tasks which has enable them to work from home. One example is a review of GP websites to ensure that patients have the very latest information to hand.

We produced our annual highlights report, documenting the work that we have conducted throughout the year. We share this report with stakeholders both directly and via joint meetings that we attend.



"The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



Message from our chair cont.

This helps to ensure that those involved in the wider system of health and care are aware of our work and any associated recommendations which may lead to improved patient experience.

Our Youthwatch volunteers have undertaken mystery shops of young people's mental health services and produced a video for a children's workshop called 'Our wishes for the future of mental health'. They have also been involved in LGBTQ+ events.

We routinely provide feedback from citizens through our two-monthly reports to the CCG. These reports include patient stories. Examples we have been alerted to include difficulties in getting aids and appliances, respite for carers of loved ones with dementia and a variety of cross-border difficulties. In every case the CCG and the Council have responded positively to these difficulties or gaps. We have surveyed our Healthwatch 100 members and those on our mailing list to gauge what their priorities are; unsurprisingly, dentistry and GP access have featured heavily in the responses.

We continue to look at how we can work more closely with the Local Authority and CCG; as part of this we have agreed to undertake two projects a year in line with their priorities. Examples include people on Personal Health Budgets, those with a learning disability attending day care services and people with mental health challenges.

During the year, we have developed our relationship with the VCFSE sector so that we can support one another in reaching out to vulnerable communities and we work jointly with their representatives on numerous groups and committees.

We anticipate many challenges for Health and Care over the next 12 months and we shall continue to do all we can to ensure that the public are kept abreast of any proposed changes to services and where possible, are involved in any subsequent consultations.



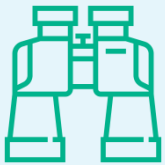
Heather Fairfield
Healthwatch Trafford Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Fairfield', written over a thin, curved line that serves as a baseline for the signature.

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Trafford is your local health and social care champion. From Stretford to Hale and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



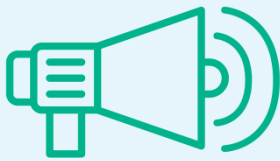
Our values

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



130 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

104,267 people

came to us over the phone and online for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

10 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

'Awareness of Long COVID and Support in Trafford'

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

31

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **61.8 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received:

£124,500

Which is **the same** as the previous year.

We also currently employ

4 staff

who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



We began our Healthwatch 100 list again, encouraging sign-ups from people across the borough to participate in our research.



We reviewed local GP websites to make sure patients could easily find key information, and gave personalised findings to the practices.

Summer



Healthwatch in Greater Manchester came together on a report about the impact of COVID-19 across all 10 boroughs.



We continued our joint working by publishing a report sharing people's experiences of dentistry during the coronavirus pandemic.

Autumn



Our young volunteers took part in a mystery shop of Kooth's online mental health platform. Kooth then responded with the changes they had made based on Youthwatch's recommendations.



We created a display of informative boards and went 'on tour' around Trafford, in hospitals and libraries. The display contained advice on care homes, complaints, and more.

Winter



During this period we continued to publicise and support public health campaigns from Trafford and Greater Manchester health and social care organisations across our channels.



We moved to a new website and worked alongside Healthwatch England to improve our content and make our advice and information better for everyone.

Making sure people find support for Long COVID

Thanks to people taking part in our research, we've worked with local commissioners to improve access to Long COVID support across the borough.

Last year saw increasing reports of post COVID infection symptoms come to light. Known as Long COVID, the condition affects people in a variety of ways and can last weeks, months, or even years after the initial infection.

Healthwatch Trafford conducted a survey to better understand what information was being provided to local people and where they could find support.



78% of people

were not aware of the existing support they could find online or through peer support.

Following the release of the report, we liaised with other local Healthwatch and sent a summary of our joint findings to Healthwatch England, who pulled our data into their wider work on the subject.

We sent our findings to care providers and organisers across the borough, and one got in contact with us to follow up. We met with the respiratory lead for Greater Manchester who was focussed on responding to Long COVID across the area and interested in improving people's access to resources.

They were able to provide information about the Long COVID referral pathway as well as give us a clearer picture about future plans. They also provided resources for people self-managing the condition, which we pulled together into a webpage. The page signposts people to a peer support group, food bank, places to find financial support, and further reading for those with additional needs.

What difference did this make

This resource on our website acts as an easily accessible 'one-stop shop' for people needing to find out more about managing Long COVID, saving confusion and distress for those overwhelmed and needing information.

Additionally, thanks to the discussions we had with the respiratory lead, we can now signpost people who are struggling with referrals and GP services. We were also invited to give feedback on the content of a patient information leaflet produced by the Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group, making sure that the information can be understood by everyone.

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



Highlighting a need for training

We heard from a local resident who was having to manage their parents' care due to a language barrier at their GP practice. Staff were unclear where to find interpreters, and the patients were forced to share private medical information with their child in order to receive care.

We reached out to the Care Quality Commission as well as Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group. The practice implemented new reception training to ensure that patients would be able to access care in a way they understood.



Making sure your voice is heard

We have attended several working groups and committees to ensure the public voice is heard and needs are considered. We engaged in these forums with an emphasis on ensuring public communications are accessible, and have attempted to implement this with our own resources.

We have contributed to multi-organisational discussions including the COVID Communications & Engagement group, ensuring public-facing messages are understandable by all. We continue to work in this way with the new Integrated Care System.



Improving care over time

Last year we published our report looking at health inequalities in North Trafford. The outcome of this report has been ongoing involvement with different groups focussed on inequalities, taking a long-term view of improvements to health and social care in the area.

This group continues to meet every 6 weeks and collaborates with GPs and other public health decision-makers, and our report generated interest among local MPs. The publication of the report has helped expand a small body of work on the subject, facilitating further work in the area.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19 and the vaccination programme
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust, and even taking it on tour!
- Working with our Local Dental Committee to help people understand the situation with dentistry and how to access care
- Sharing your stories (anonymously) with regulatory bodies to improve local services



How to: GET THE BEST FROM A GP APPOINTMENT

Whether on the phone or in person, Healthwatch Trafford has advice and guidance to help you make the most of this time.

Before your visit

- Consider booking a **double appointment** if you have several problems to discuss.
- **Could the practice nurse** deal with your issue instead? Check when booking the appointment.
- **Write down any questions or concerns** beforehand and take a pen and paper to make notes.
- If you need a **bandage** or the surgery knows they should arrange one for you.
- **Wear loose accessible clothes** if you are frail, to ease an examination.
- If you **cannot make your appointment**, let the practice know as soon as possible so they can fill the slot.
- Bring a list of all the **medication** you are currently taking.

During your appointment

- Say the **most important thing first**, do not leave it until the end when you may be rushed.
- Do not be afraid to **ask questions** if anything unclear. Take someone for support if you there you may struggle to understand.
- Check that you have **answered** all the questions on your list and **leave with the contact** if you need further information.
- After your visit, if you feel unhappy about the treatment you have received, you can **ask to see another GP** from the practice.

Where can you find out more?

You can also view a number of questions for your GP from the left website at www.nhs.uk/health-services/gps/what-to-ask-your-doctor/

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How to: MAKE A COMPLAINT

You can make a complaint about any area of the NHS and social care services. You can complain about your experience, or on behalf of children, people who have died, people who can't complain, or someone who has asked you to.

Local Resolution

The first step is called local resolution. This means complaining to the service provider or the people who **commission** it. Address your letter to the person in charge, and include any places, dates, and names you can remember.

What happens next?

Your complaint must be acknowledged within **3 working days**, either verbally or in writing. The complaint must be dealt with in a reasonable amount of time, though this can vary depending on the service.

What to do if you're not happy

If you feel there has been an unreasonable delay, you can request a review from the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**.

More options

You can contact the **Care Quality Commission** as they use this information to inspect services. You can also contact your local Healthwatch for advice on where to find help.

Scan me for further guidance!

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Introducing: YOUTHWATCH TRAFFORD

Youthwatch Trafford are our team of young volunteers, working with Healthwatch to connect with young people and find out about their experiences of health and care.

Youthwatch Health and Care Hub

The Youthwatch Trafford website has its own **Health and Care Hub**, where you can find **handy guidance** written specifically for young people, on the following topics and more:

- Asthma Awareness
- Healthy Living
- LGBTQ+
- Mental Health
- Domestic Abuse
- Emergency First Aid

You can also **submit your own questions** for Youthwatch to answer!

Mental Health

Youthwatch Trafford's top information guide that they want you to know about!

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act, as well as how we feel we can cope with tough situations. If you're worried about your mental health, there is support available.

- **School Nurse** – Ask your school how to reach the school nurse to talk about any mental or physical issues you're experiencing.
- **GP** – your GP can assess and refer you to the right people.
- **Trafford Talkshop** – For ages 11 to 19 (and occasionally up to 25 in some cases). They offer help for mental health, sexual health, young parents, LGBT young people and many more! Call 0161 912 2453, or email talkshop@trafford.gov.uk
- **Urgent help** – If you feel you want to harm yourself or others, or are going to commit suicide, then you should call 999 or get to a hospital as soon as possible. You can also get in touch with the Samaritans free of charge by calling 116 123 at any time – they're ready to listen to you and help you talk through your worries 24/7.
- **Kooth** – Kooth provides free, safe and anonymous online support for young people. Visit their website: www.kooth.co.uk

Scan me to visit the Hub!

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youthwatchtrafford.co.uk

Signposting people who needed additional support

Accessing dental care has been an ongoing challenge since pre-pandemic times. For some, additional issues can make the situation much worse.

A local resident contacted us as they were unable to access maternity dental care, and a number of ongoing and urgent dental problems which needed addressing, including some worsened by childbirth. They did not know where to turn and were struggling to find somewhere that would offer multiple appointments to deal with their various concerns.



We liaised with the Local Dental Committee to try and find a solution to the problem, and ensure that the committee were aware of issues around follow-on care after urgent appointments.

Ensuring everyone can access GP services

It can be difficult for many people to understand NHS systems, including staff members themselves. This means that issues can remain unresolved until someone pushes for a solution. When communication breaks down between staff and patients, having advice from a third party can really make a difference.

We heard from a member of the public who was unable to register for GP services due a problem with their NHS number.



They needed to see a doctor, and were struggling to understand what was going on. Practice staff were unsure how to resolve the problem, and needed some additional training and information on registration issues.

We got in contact with the Care Quality Commission, and advise the patient on how to make a complaint. The practice were then able to register the patient, who was offered a full health check, and additional training was provided to ensure the problem did not happen again.

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, supporting The Big Conversation in Greater Manchester
- Conducted engagement work through online research including website reviews and fact finding
- Supported our surveys and delivered flyers throughout the borough
- Taking part in developing our strategies
- Participated in our Readers' Panel to check our reports before they go out

Our Youthwatch volunteers also worked hard, taking part in the Bee Counted young inspectors programme, as well as participating in the GP website reviews and marshalling at a local COVID vaccination clinic. They also supported our work by helping distribute flyers for our surveys (pictured below).





Catherine

“After I left teaching, I was interested in finding a volunteering role which could help make a difference in other people's lives. As Health and Social Care affects all of us, volunteering for Healthwatch Trafford seemed the ideal opportunity. I have been a volunteer for 6 years now and in that time I have been involved in many different activities in community based venues and Health/Social Care settings. I have found it a very interesting and rewarding experience...helping others, learning new skills and acquiring a range of knowledge. I've also enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.



Susan

“I've been volunteering since 2013 as an Enter and View representative for Healthwatch Trafford. Initially this was because my husband had Parkinson's Disease for several years, during which time I had experience of almost every service: district nurses, podiatrists, carers, social workers, hospitals and finally a care home. I always felt that it was often the smallest things that could have made the biggest difference to us and I wanted to help others going through a similar experience. Through volunteering I've met and worked with lots of great people, learned so much about the health service and it's really broadened my horizons. One thing led to another and I'm now a Director.”



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.



www.healthwatchtrafford.co.uk



0300 999 0303



[Boluwatife@healthwatchtrafford.co.uk](mailto:boluwatife@healthwatchtrafford.co.uk)

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income		Income	
Funding received from local authority	£124,500	Staff costs	£135,354
Additional funding	£17,325	Operational costs	£23,069
		Support and administration	£7,568
Total income	£141,825	Total expenditure	£165,991

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Mental health: children’s mental health in Greater Manchester, and adult services in Trafford.
2. We will be undertaking a Learning Disability Day Services project with the council
3. We will be focussing on recommencing public engagement after COVID and rebuilding our relationship with the community.

Next steps

We will be building relationships within the new Integrated Care System and finding our place in the new structure, in order to continue our work.

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Trafford, Colony 5, Piccadilly Place Manchester, M1 3BR

Healthwatch Trafford uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board consists of 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as the re-structuring of staff and moving to a virtual office, both in the interests of long term sustainability.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. At the start of the year we ran a survey to gather opinion on what our priority areas should be. This survey was used alongside other ongoing information from the public to shape our next workplan. For example we review our enquiry and signposting work throughout the year and therefore at the start of a new year also use this insight to help plan for the coming period.

Our Chair and Chief Officer are present at a number of local meetings with stakeholders, many of which conduct their own engagement. What we hear about public views from bodies like the Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs, clinical leaders and the Local Authority is therefore also factored into our plans.

We stay up-to-date with what local groups and charities highlight about local opinion through our engagement with them and general engagement at events run through these organisations.

By using the Healthwatch report library, as well as updates from Healthwatch England, we determine where there are national issues that might be relevant for investigation. As Healthwatch England hears opinions from the whole country this helps improve our understanding of people's experiences.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

The way we work cont.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, continuing to promote and expand our mailing list following its reset last year. We also have built on the findings of our work into inequality in health access by holding regular meetings with a working group focused on this topic area. Our communications officer has been improving how our published news and other calls on social media are accessible, for example with alt text or using the webpages not just PDF.

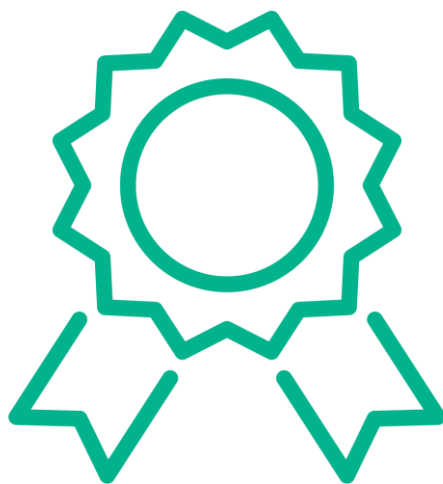
We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website as well as it being promoted through our contact list.

Responses to recommendations and requests

One foundation trust did not respond to requests for information.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.



Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Trafford is represented on the Trafford Health and Wellbeing Board by Heather Fairfield, Chair of the Board. 2021/22 saw a stock take of the effectiveness of the Health and Wellbeing Board as it had become focussed on a few (important) areas. A survey of the functioning of the board was undertaken and this led to an independent review by health and local government representatives. Whilst maintaining the key priorities, which are ongoing and longer term, it was agreed that the board should extend its focus to a wider range of topics making full use of key partners in addressing inequalities. Such an approach would enable taking a thematic in depth review of specific areas of concern. This would add to and complement the work of the Locality Board and broaden horizons.

2021-2022 reports

Access to General Practice in Trafford: Website review	April 2021
Performance report April - May 2021	June 2021
Annual report 2020 - 21	June 2021
Performance report June - July 2021	August 2021
Greater Manchester dentistry report	August 2021
HW100: Health and Social Care Priority Areas	August 2021
North Trafford Project report	September 2021
Performance report August - September 2021	October 2021
Youthwatch Trafford: Kooth.com Mystery Shop	October 2021
HW100: Awareness of Long COVID and Support in Trafford	October 2021
COVID-19 in Trafford: 2021 update	November 2021
Performance report October - November 2021	December 2021
Performance report December 2021 - January 2022	February 2022



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Healthwatch Trafford
Colony 5
Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BR

www.healthwatchtrafford.co.uk

t: 0300 999 0303

e: info@healthwatchtrafford.co.uk

@HealthwatchTraf
[Facebook.com/HealthwatchTrafford/](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchTrafford/)